



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF ORANGE COUNTY COLLABORATED WITH OAKLEY TO HOST CAREER DAY MOTIVATING AT-RISK YOUTH ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The 3rd Annual Career Day Helps Youth Fulfill Their Potential and Build Their Futures by Exploring Various Careers and Colleges

Foothill Ranch, Calif. (November 4, 2014) – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County, a Tustin-based nonprofit organization that helps youth realize their potential and build their futures through one-on-one mentoring, provided 101 “Big” and “Little” mentorship matches with the opportunity to explore the iconic Oakley headquarters in Foothill Ranch on November 1, during the nonprofit’s 3rd Annual Oakley Career Day. The event was a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County’s [Destination College+](#) program, which provides tools and resources for “Littles” to stay on track toward on-time high school graduation and guide them towards college readiness and entry, all while providing career awareness and preparation.

To excite and educate “Littles” on opportunities to attend college, the event offered at-risk youth the chance to explore various career paths and colleges and be inspired by others who overcame hardships and are now in successful careers. Ten speakers, including “Bigs,” Oakley leadership, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County board members, and top Orange County business leaders, shared their stories of growing up facing adversity, overcoming obstacles to pursue a higher education degree and how that path led to their professional endeavors.

“Our Destination College program has supported more than 300 “Littles” since the program began three years ago, and this year’s Oakley Career Day was by far the most well attended and well executed! It grew from 38 attending matches in 2013 to 101 matches this year,” said Melissa Beck, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County. “Many “Littles” would not otherwise receive educational support and resources without Destination College, and it is vital to helping these at-risk youth achieve their higher education goals and giving them a brighter future.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County supporter Tina Aldatz, founder of Foot Petals Inc., keynoted the event. Members of the nonprofit’s board of directors including Enrique Perez, assistant vice chancellor of the Rancho Santiago Community College District, were among the Orange County business professionals who spoke to “Littles” to introduce, excite and educate them on opportunities to go to college.

“Littles” also received information on college financial aid and the application process. More so, “Littles” received information from California State University, Fullerton, California State University, Long Beach, University of California, Irvine, and Chapman University and learned about the following careers: nurse, principal, small business owner and entrepreneur, dean, journalist, lawyer, employment counselor, non-profit professional, and engineer.

During the event, “Littles” signed college pledges and set goals to put themselves on a path for attending college.

Attendees also had the chance to participate in opportunity drawings and “Littles” had the chance to win donated prizes such as six pairs of Oakley sunglasses. “We are happy to host Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County’s Destination College program to help motivate and educate the “Littles” in our community about the importance of a college education and great career opportunities that can follow,” said Jennifer

Walker, Oakley Community Relations. Oakley's contributions to the event, including in-kind donations, totaled \$13,000.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County provides over 2,400 children facing adversity with professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships to change their lives for the better. With 60 percent of parents or guardians of children served by the nonprofit without a high school diploma, 70 percent of "Littles" are the first in their family to graduate high school on time with 87 percent of "Littles" going on to earn some form of higher education. Youth ("Littles") are matched with volunteer mentors ("Bigs") to develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on their lives, with results including: in 2013-2014, 98% of "Littles" graduated high school on time. More so, 83% of "Littles" enrolled in college and 100% said their "Big" was their biggest influence to pursue a higher education for a better future.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County's Destination College program helps mentors to introduce, excite and educate "Littles" on opportunities to go to college through college-information nights, career days, college admission support, including SAT prep programs through Princeton Review, and through college tours.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County

For more than 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. Most children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters live in single-parent and low-income families, or households where a parent is incarcerated. As the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"). Providing a system of ongoing evaluation and support, Big Brothers Big Sisters is proven by independent studies to help families by improving the odds that "Littles" will perform better in school and avoid violence and illegal activities, and have stronger relationships with their parents and others. Headquartered in Dallas with a network of nearly 400 agencies across the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters serves a quarter million children annually. In 2013, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County served over 2,400 children. For more information, visit www.bigbrooc.org.

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